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# “THY KINGDOM COME!”

## A SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION

OF THE

MEANING OF THAT PRAYER.

BY THE

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“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.”—1 JOHN iii. 1, 2.

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## “THY KINGDOM COME!”

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THESE words appear upon the surface extremely simple ; but, when we inquire particularly into their meaning, the explanations which we commonly receive prove both indeterminate and unsatisfactory. The subject is overcast with vagueness, by reason of certain notions which have grown up in the popular mind. These may be briefly reduced to the following summary. It is believed that the kingdom of God signifies the present Christian dispensation ; that it is a spiritual kingdom in the heart ; and that to pray for its *coming* is to pray for its *extension* in the world. It is thought that by means of missionary preaching this extension will go on until the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord. With these ideas of the *progress*, rather than what the words import, the *coming* or *commencement* of the kingdom, is blended, somewhat confusedly, the belief that upon death good people go at once to the kingdom of heaven, there to reign with God the Father in glory everlasting—by the word *reign*, however, meaning not to rule over subjects, but simply to be happy. This, by the way, seems more like their going to the kingdom, than the kingdom coming to them. It is also understood, that bad people at their death go at once to hell, to share the torments of the devil and his angels, presumed to be there imprisoned, though tempting men upon earth. It is further believed that there will be one simultaneous resurrection, when all generations of mankind shall give an account of all they ever did, or said, or thought, in a day called the day of judgment, when Christ shall judge them all ; his saints being, in some not very

intelligible way, not only judged themselves, but also assessors with Him, and ratifying His decisions by their approval. Finally, that the earth will be burnt up, and blotted out of creation; the good going back again to heaven, the bad to hell for ever. These articles of the popular faith are entwined round our dawning religious conceptions, and grow up with our religious life. Entrenched behind the strongholds of prejudice, they become in some minds unassailable, alike by reason and Scripture. Nevertheless, it is our duty to combat them whenever they obstruct our search after clearer and more consistent apprehensions of God's revealed purposes.

We may, perhaps, wish that our Saviour in teaching the words "*thy kingdom come!*" had also taught their precise signification. But we should remark, that He seems to have taken for granted that those to whom He taught the prayer had previously acquired, from the prophets and from John the Baptist, as well as from his own preaching, distinct apprehensions of a certain kingdom not yet set up, but for which it behoved them ardently to long, and fervently to pray. It is an important fact, that the setting up of a new kingdom upon earth was the leading topic of that day. (See Matt. ii. 1, 2; Mark xv. 43; Luke xvii. 20, and xix. 11; John vi. 15.) Although the national expectation that a new kingdom would be set up was well founded, the Jews greatly mistook its nature. Our Saviour continually points out to His followers that they erred, not in expecting a new kingdom upon earth, not in entertaining exalted ideas of its glory, not even in aspiring to sit upon His right hand and His left in that kingdom, but in modelling their views upon the pride of Gentile princes, forgetting that their road to future greatness lay, like His own, through a vale of humiliation, in which they must drink of His cup, and seek not to be ministered unto, but to minister. If the Jews imagined this kingdom to be altogether carnal, do not Christians run into the opposite extreme by making it purely internal and spiri-

tual? What is commonly understood by preaching the Gospel is preaching the fall of man, the love of God, the cross and atonement, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and kindred topics. The importance of such preaching cannot be overrated. Yet, it may be asked, is this, after all, preaching *the Gospel, the glad tidings*, to wit, of the kingdom, or only preaching certain truths preparatory to the *good news* of the kingdom? We never read of preaching the Gospel of the cross; but we often and emphatically read of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. The reason is plain. Glad tidings are associated, not with the cross, but with the crown. If to this it be answered, that the angel proclaimed, as a subject of great joy, that a Saviour was born, we must bear in mind that this Saviour was born a king, and that a Saviour's work consists, not merely in earning salvation, but still more in conferring it. Let us now proceed by regular steps to ascertain what Scripture teaches on the subject.

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#### THE TITLES OF THE KINGDOM.

Of these there is a considerable variety, as *the kingdom of God—of heaven—of Christ—of the Son of man*; but that they all mean the same kingdom is not, I believe, questioned; and if it were, proof might easily be given of their identity by a simple comparison of texts which use these different phrases in the same sense.

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#### THE LOCALITY OF THE KINGDOM.

The universal practice of speaking of heaven and earth in contrast, naturally suggests, as a first thought, that the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom somewhere up in the sky, and it is supposed to be that empyreal region where the Deity displays the glory of His presence. Upon second thoughts we are led to consider that "*heaven*" is a word of various import, whose particular sense depends upon the context in

which it is used. Sometimes it is the immediate region of our atmosphere, in respect of which we read of *the dew* of heaven, *the clouds*, *the fowls*, and *the winds* of heaven. Sometimes it is the sidereal heaven, above our atmosphere, in which the stars appear. Sometimes it is the heaven of heavens, the habitation of God's holiness. St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven; but he explains his own understanding of the wonderful fact by a re-assertion of it, in which he calls the place "*Paradise*,"—the abode of happy spirits. In the phrase "*the kingdom of heaven*," the word "*heaven*," which admits of such variety of meaning, does not decide the locality. But from other Scriptures we learn that the kingdom, so spoken of, is to be upon the earth. Plain as this conclusion will presently be shown to be, many, prepossessed with the popular belief, refuse to understand the Word of God in its obvious sense, alleging, forsooth, that it would be to lower the dignity of Christ and the prospects of believers to suppose that they should reign on this earth. Such reasoners prefer their own imaginings to the more intelligible expectations suited to man, and derived from Scripture. If, in contemplation of Messiah's Second Advent, they deem it insufferable to infer that He should reign on the earth, how (had they lived at His first advent) would they have interpreted the Scriptures which spoke of piercing His hands and His feet, giving him gall and vinegar, parting His garments and casting lots for His vesture? How would they have received His own explicit announcement, that He must suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes and be killed? If they would have said, "Be it far from thee, Lord," they would have had an apostle to side with them, but that apostle was mistaken. The literal interpretation was the true one: shall we accept it for the cross and decline it for the crown? It is not by our private fancies we are to determine what may be suitable to Messiah and His saints, but by humble and prayerful examination of the Word of God.

The Prophet Daniel, depicting the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and the four beasts seen by himself, twice describes the four Gentile sovereignties which should successively rule, and have, accordingly, ruled the earth; the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and the Roman. On their ruins a fifth monarchy is to be erected, *likewise upon earth*. In Nebuchadnezzar's vision this is represented by a Stone, which smites the image, scatters its fragments, and becomes a great mountain, which fills the *whole earth*. Again, the locality of the *earth* is signified in the vision of the beasts; for, upon the destruction of the fourth beast, the Son of Man receives dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. And that it is not in heaven, but *upon earth*, that we are to look for all peoples, nations, and languages, is made plain. For the kingdom of the Son of man which is to be shared with the saints is declared to be, *not in heaven*, but under it—"And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Consistently with this teaching St. Paul says, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) And if St. Paul is here silent as to the locality of this joint reign, St John determines it; for we find the redeemed giving glory to the Lamb, and saying—"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and *we shall reign on the earth*." (Rev. v. 10.)

We have no reason to stumble at the application of the word heaven to a kingdom whose seat will be the earth. For that kingdom whose principles of government are high and holy, may, in Scripture phrase, on that account be called heavenly. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus to Pilate; that is, it is not worldly and unholy like that kingdom of Cæsar, against which I am accused of sedition. But yet, in another sense, it will be of this world, because "the kingdoms of *this world*" will become "the



## THY KINGDOM COME.

Lord and of his Christ." (Rev. xi. 15.)  
lominion, they will be conducted on hea-  
What, it may be asked, makes one place  
r a heaven? We must not forget, that  
heaven of heavens, cannot contain God ;  
Omnipresent Deity, in a more especial  
His attributes, there is heaven. And what  
t such a display upon the redeemed earth ?  
l be no more curse, but the throne of God  
shall be in it, and his servants shall serve  
all see his face . . . . and they shall reign  
er." (Rev. xxii. 3—5.) These, surely, will  
*heaven upon the earth.*" (Deut. xi. 21.)

view, interesting to remark, that upon the  
Kingdom Come!" immediately follows,  
one in earth, as it is in heaven !" The grant  
ssential to the fulfilment of the second. For  
e new dispensation, can we expect God's will  
earth lovingly, generally, publicly, privately,  
ne in heaven by holy angels, those "ministers  
his pleasure." While angels have heaven for  
gion, earth is the native region of men ; and it  
port with the Divine economy to rule over  
its proper sphere, while both may be alike in  
appy obedience. This, which is but a conjec-  
with the Word ; but it is to what the Word  
s, and not to mere conjecture, that we appeal

clearly it is laid down in such Scriptures as we  
to, that the kingdom predicted by Daniel and  
ets, and proclaimed by the Baptist and by  
be upon the earth, there is a popular theology  
in nursery rhymes, in hymns, in prayers, in  
current conversation, and even in many a  
ommentary, which decidedly militates against  
The adverse doctrine is, that Christians go at

once to heaven, there to reign for ever. We must subject this popular theory to strict examination.

When the soul is separated from the body, it appears from Scripture that it goes into the *unseen place* called Hades. Our old Saxon word *Hell* is of the same import; but, unfortunately, in modern use it has come to signify, not the unseen place in general, but Gehenna, or the place of torment. When the beggar died he was carried by the angels not into heaven, but into Abraham's bosom. What was carried? not his wretched body, but his believing soul. "The rich man also died, and was buried." What was buried? not his imperishable soul, but his pampered body. As to his soul it went into hell; that is into Hades, or the unseen place. True, we read of the eyes and tongue of Dives, of the finger of Lazarus, of the bosom of Abraham; but this mode of speaking is probably used to convey ideas which we could not receive if expressed in terms suited to sensations experienced apart from the body. The language does not imply a period subsequent to the resurrection; for, besides that the facts follow directly upon death, the rich man has five brethren still living in the present wicked world. There are two regions then in Hades; one of rest, the other of wretchedness. The former is called Paradise by our Lord. Thither, and not to heaven, his own soul, as well as that of the penitent thief, went upon death. The Hebrew word *Sheol*, often mistranslated, "*the grave*," is the same as Hades, or the unseen place, which is evident, as Bishop Lowth remarks, from the language of Jacob, who says, "I will go down to Sheol unto my son mourning." He could not mean the grave, as we have it now in our translation, for his belief then was that Joseph's body was devoured by a wild beast. His reference, clearly, was to his disembodied soul. Our Lord distinguishes between the place of his own soul, during the three days, and heaven, saying to Mary Magdalene, "I am not yet ascended to my Father." Why? because Paradise, where his soul had been,

is not heaven. And St. Peter, *after Christ's ascension*, speaks of David (whose condition may fairly be taken as the same with that of other saints,) saying, "David is not ascended into the heavens," (Acts ii. 34,) which passage takes away all ground for alleging, as some do, that when Christ led captivity captive at his ascension he led his disembodied saints from Paradise, where they were captives, to heaven.

It is no just interpretation to say David's body was not yet ascended, for St. Peter is showing, that the passage quoted by him related not to David but to Christ. Christ's soul, he says, was not left in Hades, plainly inferring that David's was, just as Christ's body saw no corruption, which, he argues on the contrary, David's did. Acts ii. 31 ; xiii. 36.

Those who entertain the popular notion that the soul goes at death to heaven, would do well to look a little more accurately, than they are accustomed to do, into the grounds of their opinion. Do they not often draw a hasty conclusion from the simple use of the word heaven, supposing it to signify the heaven of heavens, when in fact the thing intended is nothing else than the promised *kingdom of heaven* upon earth? Our Lord, speaking of persecution, says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*." And again, speaking of the same persons, He says, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward *in heaven*." Here therefore, heaven is that kingdom of heaven referred to just before. And that this kingdom of heaven is to be upon earth, is further evinced: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*. Blessed are the meek, for they shall *inherit the earth*." It is doubtless the same reward which he promises to both.

But it is necessary to examine two remarkable texts which are strongly relied on for the popular belief under consideration.

In 2 Cor. v. 8, St. Paul says, "Absent from the body,

and present with the Lord;" from which it is inferred that the Christian's soul goes to heaven at death, since it is in heaven, and not in paradise, that our Lord now abides. I admit that it is a presence with our Lord's humanity (not his divinity, which is always and everywhere present) that is spoken of. But the whole question turns upon whether the Christian's presence with his Lord is to take place *immediately* upon death, or not until the Lord comes from heaven to sit upon His judgment seat. In his former Epistle, St. Paul had already told the Corinthians "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." This was expressly in reference to the resurrection. In like manner he speaks here—"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This parallel shows that here too he is referring to the time of the resurrection. The *natural body* is the same as the *earthly house of this tabernacle* or the body from which we are to be *absent*. So likewise the spiritual body is the same as the building of God—the house not made with hands. The time, therefore, for the one, is the same as the time for the other—viz., the resurrection; and the expression, "eternal in the heavens," may easily be understood of the kingdom of heaven, in which the resurrection body is to be enjoyed. The Apostle proceeds:—"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." And again: "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Here we have two additional keys to the sense—namely, the *groaning* and the *swallowing up*. To the Romans the Apostle had said, "Even we ourselves *groan* within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. viii. 23.) The sentiment is precisely the same; and as the adoption, or redemption of the body, for which the Roman Christians *groaned*, related

to the resurrection, so it is for the resurrection the Corinthian Christians *groaned*, with the desire to be clothed upon with their house from heaven. The expression, "mortality being *swallowed up* of life," is identical in meaning with "death *swallowed up* in victory," which, in 1 Corinthians, xv. 54, St. Paul had already synchronized with the resurrection. Moreover, he here goes on to say, "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body." This renders it still more evident, that in speaking of presence with the Lord, St. Paul had in his mind, not the Christian's meeting at his death his Lord in heaven, but meeting Him when he comes to judgment. The same is the teaching of St. John—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that *when he shall appear*, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) St. Paul teaches that even now our affections should be in heaven with Christ. (Col. iii. 1-4.) But with him they are to return to earth—"For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

The other passage to be examined is Phil. i. 23—"To depart and be with Christ." If we had no other light from Scripture, these words would seem to intimate an *immediate* ascent into heaven at death; but we must not so interpret them as to bring them into collision with other Scriptures. One text often takes for granted such knowledge of other texts, as secures the intelligent reader from being misled by its conciseness. Of this many examples might be cited. Thus we are told nothing of the piety of Lazarus. It would, nevertheless, be an unwarrantable conclusion, that he received good things in Abraham's bosom, because he had received evil things here. We are bound to infer that the true reason, though not expressed, was, that he had walked in the steps of Abraham's faith. Again, St. Paul says, "It is

appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) Here he brings together the two prominent ideas which he had in his mind—death and judgment—overlooking the intermediate state. The same thing he may be understood to do in the words "Depart, and be with Christ." Having his mind strongly bent upon the Second Advent, he grasps it, as following upon death, just as persons about to settle in a distant country speak of leaving their old abode, and entering upon their new one, overlooking the intermediate passage, as not requiring at that moment to be spoken of.

In many Christian hearts there is a yearning to be with Christ immediately upon death, and we must respect the feeling. If, however, Paradise, to which our Lord's own soul went on separation from His body, be a different place from heaven, and if it be to Paradise the soul of the Christian, in like manner, goes at death, it follows, of necessity, that Christ's body, which cannot be in two places at the same time, will not be seen in the separate state, unless, indeed, as some imagine, Christ occasionally gladdens the souls of His saints by visiting them there. But on this the Scriptures are silent. We may, on the whole, adopt the general assurance expressed in our Burial Service, that "the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity."

Another popular error, which precludes just sentiments concerning the kingdom yet to come upon earth, is that the earth will be annihilated. The strongest passage to which the holders of this opinion can appeal, is probably 2 Peter iii. 5-13. Upon examining that passage, the reader will find that a parallel is drawn by the Apostle between the judgment by water and the judgment by fire. The effect of the flood was, that "the world that then was *perished*." The effect of the fire will be, that the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be *burnt up* and dissolved. If the strong word "*perished*" did not mean an utter extinction by water, so neither do the parallel expressions indicate extinction by fire

Again : " The heavens and the earth which are now," is an expression which indicates that the antediluvian heavens and earth, or " the world that then was," had passed away. In like manner, in the judgment by fire, it is said, " the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." If, in the former case, the heavens and the earth were not really annihilated, but only underwent some great physical change, so neither do the words applied to the latter judgment import more than some other great physical change in the same globe. As to the extent of both judgments, it is observable that geologists find traces of partial floods, but of no universal deluge. And whereas the language in which the catastrophe is thus recorded is so ample as to embrace the entire planet, we must remember that Scripture often expresses great things by hyperbole, and therefore may here be understood as relating the destruction of the human race, so far as it extended, with the dependent creatures, and not the whole globe. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is described as co-extensive with the earth—" Thou, O king, art a King of kings ; and whosoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." (Dan. ii. 37, 38.) And again : " Thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion unto the ends of the earth." (Dan. iv. 22.) In such passages we know that a limitation of the apparent magnitude must be understood ; and so, likewise, in those which describe the flood : and if the flood were partial, so may be the fire. To this notion we are the rather led, because the Roman Empire, whose body is to be destroyed, and given to *the burning flame*" (Dan. vii. 11,) is spoken of in the New Testament in the like ample terms—" There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that *all the world* should be taxed." (Luke ii. 1.) And in the Apocalypse, the earth is constantly put for Roman Christendom ; and this beast, the Roman Empire, or earth, is to be cast into a lake of fire. (Rev. xix. 20.) That a vast

portion of the world, so long favoured with religious opportunities, should be visited with exemplary judgments for abuse of them, while other portions of the earth should be left unscathed, is agreeable to the general rule of God's dealings. And we are further taught, that there are nations which shall be saved, and which shall walk in the light of the New Jerusalem—(Rev. xxi. 24)—a notion quite incompatible with the destruction of all nationality by the extermination of this whole mundane system. We are thus left to our former conclusion, that the locality of the kingdom will be the earth.

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#### THE ERA OR COMMENCEMENT OF THE KINGDOM.

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” (Mark i. 14, 15.) How are we to explain this statement? Must we, with some, take the kingdom of God not to mean a proper kingdom, in the ordinary sense, but only the Christian dispensation, because no kingdom, in the ordinary sense, appears from subsequent events to have been at hand, whereas the Christian dispensation, which claims the heart for the spiritual throne of Jesus, really was at hand? or, taking the kingdom in its natural sense, must we understand the words *at hand* to mean not at hand, or near, but very far off? To neither of these solutions can we have recourse. The kingdom spoken of, and expected, was undoubtedly that in which the stone was to smite the image and destroy it, which is not yet done. Moreover, the kingdom is one in which not only Jesus but his saints are to reign, as described by Daniel, and alluded to in specific terms in the New Testament. Unless, therefore, it could be said that the saints have received that kingdom by means of the Christian dispensation, it cannot be said that the Christian dispensation was signified in our Lord's preaching that the kingdom



of God was at hand. And as to the words *at hand*, though we admit that words expressive of time may sometimes be understood not in the ordinary sense of human calculation, but on a divine scale, referable to the calculation of God, with whom a thousand years are but as as one day, yet we cannot apply that explanation here, for our Lord emphatically said, "*the time is fulfilled*;" and, coupling with that statement the assurance respecting the kingdom being at hand, we can understand no less than that He was then ready to institute it. This undoubtedly was the sense in which His disciples understood Him; and we see the bitter disappointment which they underwent in the words of the two on their way to Emmaus, (Luke xxiv. 21;) and again, in the question of the apostles at the Ascension, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Taking our Lord's preaching in the plain sense, why was not the kingdom instituted as He taught people to expect? The answer is very simple. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He gave them full opportunity, by signs and wonders, of ascertaining His Messiahship. And after proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom throughout all the country, He went so far as to take the first step to the opening of it; for he fulfilled the words—"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold, *thy King* cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (Matt. xxi. 5.) And when He entered Jerusalem He began to exercise His royal authority—first, as His paramount object, by vindicating the glory of God, which He did by driving the traders from His temple; and, secondly, by healing the blind and the lame, agreeably to the prediction—"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper." (Ps. lxxii. 12.) But the kingdom thus instituted was refused. The rulers, instead of accepting, questioned His authority; and not long after the whole nation called out for His crucifixion, and he was accordingly nailed to a cross with the inscription over Him,

“The King of the Jews.” The effect of this rejection He had signified by saying, “The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matt. xxi. 43.) And what that nation which was to come into the place of typical Israel was to be, we learn from other parts of Scripture, viz., a nation called out and gathered from among all nations. It was to consist partly of Jews and partly of Gentiles as fellow-heirs, a combination which had previously been a mystery. (Eph. iii. 4-6.) And St. Peter accurately defines it in telling Christians, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” (1 Pet. ii. 9.) On another occasion our Lord thus indicated what the effect of His rejection would be on the Jewish nation, “Your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Matt. xxiii. 38, 39.) These words plainly import an adjournment of the era for commencing the kingdom from the period when at His first advent the King offered to institute it, until His second advent, when that nation will welcome Him.

It is remarkable that the history of Israel affords an exemplification of such an adjournment as we are now considering. To Moses the Lord declared His purpose at the bush, “I am come down to deliver them (the Israelites) out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Exod. iii. 8.) Accordingly, God brings them out of Egypt, and sends out twelve spies to spy out the promised land. Upon their return, Joshua, a distinguished type of Jesus, together with Caleb, encourages the people to go up *at once*, but all the congregation (fit types of those who cried out, “Crucify Him”) bade stone them with stones. Upon this the offer was retracted; or, as in the case of the kingdom, the blessing was taken from that generation and transferred to another. In denouncing

that generation the Lord says, "Ye shall know my *breach of promise*." (Num. xiv. 34.) He promised a blessing as at hand, and so it was, but "they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word," (Ps. cvi. 24;) and therefore He made a breach of His promise, that is, by postponement. Upon making this postponement, He uttered a solemn oath—"But as truly as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." David transfers this sentiment from the type to the anti-type. Looking forward to Messiah's kingdom he expatiates upon its boundless extent, and then exclaims, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and *let the whole earth be filled with his glory*. Amen, and Amen." (Ps. lxxii. 18, 19.) In expounding the Book of Numbers, commentators find a difficulty in explaining the oath, relative to the whole earth, in connection with the limited land of Canaan. But, consider the postponement in that case as typical of the postponement of Christ's world-wide kingdom, and all perplexity vanishes.

In consequence of this postponement it ceased to be proper to announce the kingdom as at hand. St Paul therefore corrects the error of the Thessalonians, who, cherishing that idea, expected the second advent in their life-time. He beseeches them, saying, "that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the *day of Christ is at hand*." (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2.) The adjournment was, to use a common phrase, *sine die*. Fixed in the Divine mind alone, the date is not announced specifically to us, and yet there are certain numerical elements revealed to guide the Church into some salutary glimmerings of the period. There is something curious in this seeming antagonism, between concealment on the one hand, and revelation on the other; but the purpose of both may be explained. As to the concealment, we have the parable—"For the Son of Man is as a

man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping; and what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." The knowledge of the precise day and hour would supersede the necessity of watching for the event until it was at hand; but ignorance of the day and hour imposes the necessity of unremitting watchfulness, which is the proper frame of mind for faithful servants, anxious for their Lord's return. It is worthy of observation, that this watchful frame of mind has been produced by the concealment of the time, as evinced by the very errors (harmless errors) of holy men, who in their eagerness for the coming of their Lord, have fallen into such miscalculations as to expect it at various periods now long past. On the other hand we have certain data, such as the 1260 days and 42 months, upon which to found a reckoning. These also serve a blessed purpose, in bringing the minds of believers into close contact with the progress of events as they arise, helping them to correct the errors into which others have fallen, and saving them from the influence of scoffers, who ask in derision, "Where is the promise of his coming?" They do not wonder that the postponement still continues, for the number of the elect is not yet accomplished, and the addition to the Church of such as shall be saved is daily going on. Meanwhile, so many predicted events have happened, so much of time has run its course, that we are more fully warranted than our forefathers in saying, "The night is far spent the day is at hand." On the whole, though the precise day be concealed from Christians as well as Infidels, there is this difference between them, that the day of the Lord will come upon the latter "as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon

## THY KINGDOM COME.

man as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not  
ape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day  
should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. v. 3, 4.)

The watchful frame precludes surprise. Observation of  
progress of events will bestow a further benefit upon the  
faithful, for though incompetent to determine the day, they  
shall be enabled to see its approach. "And, when these  
things," says our Lord, "begin to come to pass, then look  
and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth  
nigh." What an encouragement to take heed of the "sure  
word of prophecy," though it shineth but as a light in a  
dark place! Even should we be led, or misled in the course  
of our studies, to compute the time as nearer or more  
distant, the very habit of dwelling upon it will promote  
in us the earnest expectation which waiteth for the  
revelation of the sons of God; the very frame which the  
disciple cultivated, who, in the prospect of death, looked  
not even the happiness of immediate rest to the more  
perfect consummation,—“Henceforth there is laid up for  
me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous  
Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only,  
but to all them also that love his appearing.” (2 Tim.

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## RESURRECTION.

At the Second Advent, not all the dead but those only  
who died in the Lord are to rise again. The common  
error is that all the dead of all generations will be raised.  
But this is not what Scripture teaches. It must,  
however, be admitted that the resurrection is sometimes  
spoken of in general terms, and if the texts which so speak  
of it alone they might be susceptible of two possible  
interpretations. Some might take them as indicating the rising  
of the dead at once—others as indicating, indeed, a re-  
surrection of all, yet not necessarily all at once, but in

different order. The former might appear to the majority the more probable. But texts of equivocal import are to be explained by others more determinate. Thus we find the two advents of Messiah spoken of in such general terms, that the Jew might understand but one event, although Christians, better informed, interpret such passages as signifying two advents, with a vast interval between them. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." (Isa. lxi. 1, 2.) Here but one advent of Messiah might seem to be meant; but our Lord when he read in the Synagogue, closed the book without reading "the day of vengeance of our God." The former words He declared to be then fulfilled; and we are led to infer that there must be another advent for the day of vengeance, even that vintage, when He will exclaim, "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." (Isa. lxiii. 4.) In like manner, many texts affirming a resurrection of all, though couched in general language, appear to include two separate events, with a vast interval between them. St. John says, "this is the first resurrection," viz, that of the blessed and holy—the resurrection of the just or justified. "But the rest of the dead" (the unjust, or unjustified) "lived not again till the thousand years were finished." (Rev. xx. 5, 6.) It is common to evade this statement, by saying either that it occurs in a symbolical book, and must not be understood literally, or that the first resurrection only means a moral change from sin to holiness. Both evasions are confuted by St. Paul. Speaking not symbolically, but literally, and exposing the heresy which said there was no resurrection, or only a moral one already past, he declares, "But every man in his own order; Christ the

first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (1 Cor. xv. 23.) Again, to comfort the Thessalonians, sowing for pious friends departed, he says, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so *them also which sleep in Jesus* will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 14-18.) Agreeably to these teachings, it is observable that the true translation of the Greek, where the resurrection of Christ's people is spoken of, is not the resurrection *of the dead*, as we have it, but the resurrection *out of*, or *from among the dead*. In some places, indeed, our translation more distinctly marks the true sense, as where our Lord speaks of those "who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection *from the dead*," (Luke xx. 35,) obviously distinguishing those who obtain it from the rest of the dead, who do not obtain that resurrection. This was the doctrine which grieved the priests as well as the Sadducees, namely, that the apostles "preached through Jesus, the resurrection *from the dead*." This again is called the resurrection of the just—"And thou shalt be blessed, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (St. Luke xiv. 14)—the same resurrection which St. Paul stretched forward with all his efforts to attain—efforts which need not have been made, if a common resurrection of the good and bad were meant. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of" (or rather *from among*) "the dead." (Phil. iii. 11.)

In contemplating the dead in Christ, who are to rise at

His second coming, we should not confine our view to those who have lived since His first coming, but extend our thoughts to all the Old Testament saints, from Abel downwards, who died in faith. When it is declared, that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, places are certainly assigned, if not priority of place, to those patriarchs, and if to them, of course to their predecessors in like saving faith. All, from first to last, will constitute what the Lord calls in a text, obscured by the interpolation of needless words, "*my dead body*;" declaring *they shall arise*, as contradistinguished from those who have no part in that blissful privilege, and of whom He had previously asserted, "they are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise." (compare Isa. xxvi. 14 with ver. 19.)

At the rising of Christ's dead, there will be associated with them another class, consisting of the quick in Christ, (comparatively less and less, as Christendom becomes more and more infidel and apostate,) whose fewness is anticipated by our Lord, in words expressive of wonder mixed with pain. "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8.) Although, as St. Paul assures the Thessalonians, these shall not *prevent* or *go before* the rising dead, yet not one of them shall fail of participation in the privilege, "For he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 31.) Christ's dead being raised, His quick shall be transfigured. "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) They will not only be transfigured or changed, like our Lord himself on the mount, when He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like



unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself," (Phil. iii. 21;) but being thus changed, they, together with the raised, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (See 1 Thess. iv. 14-18.)

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#### THE JUDGMENT.

The resurrection of Christ's dead, the transfiguration of his quick saints from corruption (or flesh and blood) to incorruption, (or spiritual bodies,) and the rapture of both to meet the Lord in the air, having been accomplished, He comes with His holy angels, (Matt. xxv. 31,) "with ten thousand of his saints," (Jude 14,) to judgment. The judgment to be delivered by the Son of Man at the last day—to wit, of the present Christian dispensation—is foretold in several passages. The persons to be judged are designated by St. Paul—"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge *the quick and the dead* at his appearing, and his kingdom." (2 Tim. iv. 1.) We must here distinguish the quick and dead already spoken of as belonging to Christ, from the quick and dead who do not belong to Him. The former will, indeed, be judged; but judgment, as applied to Christ's people, is a very different thing from judgment as applied to Christ's enemies. There is a common idea that every thought, word, and deed, will be brought up at the day of judgment; and it is grasped at by many preachers, to whom it affords a facility for making strong appeals to the terrified imagination of their hearers. They apply it to Christ's people as well as to others. This notion savours too much of striking a balance between their good deeds and their bad ones, as if it was by that and not by their Saviour's finished work His people were to be saved. It is repugnant to the very notion of forgiveness, that a man should be forgiven first and tried afterwards. Our Lord declares, that the believer "*hath* everlasting life, and shall not

come into judgment (*κρισις*), but *is passed from death unto life.*" (John v. 24.) It would not be true that the believer is already passed from death unto life, if he were still to take his trial. After God has transferred his sins from him, and laid them upon his Surety, it would be neither faithful nor just to bring them up to him again, whereas St. John assures us, that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Let those general texts, which speak of bringing up everything, be used in reference to those who will be condemned; but, as to believers, "it is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come, from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ." (Acts iii. 19, 20.) "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. In his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live." (Ezek. xviii. 22.) "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him." (Ezek. xxxiii. 16.) To adopt Bishop Horsley's words, "No remembrance is had in heaven of forsaken sin." In accordance with these assurances, we find in Scripture a sense of the word judgment as applicable, not to trial, but simply to reward and vindication. "The time of the dead that they should be *judged*," is identified with the time "that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants, the prophets, and to the saints." (Rev. xi. 18.) When St. Paul lays it down, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, it is not that the saints are to be subjected to trial, but that they may receive according to the things done in the body—that is, according to their good things; for as to sin, it is not imputed to them at all. (Rom. iv. 8.) The difference between judgment, as applied to good and bad, is distinctly brought out by Solomon—"Hear thou from heaven, and do, and *judge* thy servants, by *requiting* the wicked, by *recompensing* his way upon his own head, and by *justifying*

the righteous, and by giving him according to his righteousness." (2 Chron. vi. 23.) So also the Psalmist—"Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity." On the other hand, when the term is applied not to vindication, but to trial, the Psalmist deprecates it, saying—"Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Ps. cxliii. 2.)

Understanding judgment in this blessed sense, we may see that the resurrection of Christ's dead, the rapture of Christ's quick, and the inheritance which follows, will be their judgment—that is, their reward. As to the rest of the dead, their resurrection and judgment is not until after the Millennium. (Rev. xx. 5.) But as to the rest of the quick, there will be a judgment proper to them, which we now proceed to consider. The different judgment of them, and of Christ's quick, is set forth in various parables. Our Lord is undoubtedly that nobleman "who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return;" and who, upon his return, reckons with his servants, bestowing on the faithful rewards of rule over ten or five cities, according to their service. But as to his citizens who "hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us," he inflicts upon them condign punishment. (Luke, xix. 12-27.) These citizens, it would seem, are not the Heathen—He never bare rule over them (Isaiah lxiii. 19)—but Jews and professing Christians. We have several other parables which throw their respective light on this awful scene—those of the wheat and tares, the good and bad fish, the wise and foolish virgins, the sheep and goats. As to the order of events, in some places the reward of the good appears to precede the condemnation of the bad; yet a different arrangement is declared—"For in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. xiii. 30.) This difference of order may be explained, by considering that the

saints, though raptured, have not yet realized their inheritance, or begun their actual reign. All things that offend must be excluded from the kingdom, before the kingdom is properly opened. The tares are burned before the wheat is garnered.

In order to understand the process of judgment, we must consider, not only what is presented to us in a summary view, but what is set forth more in detail.

Israel after the flesh—both the outcasts, descendants of the ten tribes, wheresoever they may now be hid, and the Jews, or dispersed among the Gentiles—the descendants of the two tribes—are to be restored to Palestine, as testified by the Prophets everywhere. This restoration will be founded upon a national repentance; but it is not necessary to suppose that this national repentance will be either individual repentance, or a national conversion to Christ. As in the case of the Ninevites, and other instances, amongst which we might remember our own deliverance from pestilence, or other judgment, the Lord accepts a general national demonstration, though we know that while a nation publicly fasts and mourns, innumerable individuals retain hardness of heart. And the national repentance of Israel may first amount to no more than that turning to the Lord in sorrow for their declensions from the law of Moses, to which a restoration is promised—“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse that I have set before thee; and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, *according to all that I command thee this day*, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy

God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee, and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed," &c. (Deut. xxx. 1-5.) For want of individual repentance and conversion to Christ, restored Israel will need purgation and chastisement in their own land; and this is to be by means of the nations who are after to receive their judgment—"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the cities shall be taken, and the houses rifled," &c. (Zechariah xiv. 2.) Their conversion would seem to be consequent upon this judgment, as more fully set forth in a former chapter—"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son," &c. (Zech. xii. 10.)

We are further taught, agreeably to the Lord's former dealings, when He made the Assyrian the rod of His anger against Israel, and that service being done, punished his stout heart, (see Isaiah, x.) that Israel being purged, He will execute judgment upon the Gentile nations, whose armies He had gathered against Jerusalem. Some pious Christians flatter themselves with a dream of the world's gradual conversion to Christianity by missions. The duty of missions is indisputable; but so far from all the world becoming obedient to the faith, it will become awfully wicked in the last days. This is testified by our Lord, who compares its condition at the time of His Second Advent to that of the times of Noah and Lot. St. Paul (2 Tim. iii. 1-5) and St. Peter (2 Pet. iii. 2-5) afford the like information most distinctly; and the truth seems to be, that the best means of grace in the hands of man fail of their proper purposes. Adam fell; the antediluvian world fell; the postdiluvians fell; the Jews fell under successive systems; and Christians have fallen, and will fall, and by their fall vindicate the necessity of the Redeemer's taking the matter into His own hands as Priest and King. All nations are to be gathered—that is, the armies of Christendom—a region which was early blest with the means of grace, the spiritual

pounds and talents, and from time to time indulged with manifold warnings while provoking the Divine patience. We have already seen, in Scriptural phrase, that the term *all* admits of limitation. It is not with the Heathen, but with His servants and citizens the Lord will reckon; and for reasons already stated, we may expect the Roman world, or earth, to be contemplated. (see *ante*, p. 14.) As to the rest of the world, it may comprehend the "*nations*" to "*be saved*," who are hereafter to walk in the light of the new Jerusalem. With respect to Christendom, St. John may be understood to say—"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, (compare Luke ii. 1,) to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty," &c. (Rev. xvi. 13-16.) Zechariah, after declaring the judgment on Jerusalem, says—"Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives." And the Prophet Joel is large in predictions to the same effect. (Joel iii.)

The agencies by which the Lord will execute judgment upon the wicked quick, are to be fire and sword. (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16.) With regard to the sword, we may look for the fulfilment when purged Israel, with the Lord at the head of them, shall turn upon their Gentile foes—when the Lord shall come with myriads of His saints, when the people shall be willing in the day of His power, as the governors offered themselves willingly in the victory of Deborah and Barak—"When he will have bent Judah, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man," as indicated in many passages familiar to the reader. And with regard to the agency of fire, the predictions are no less full.

The Psalmist, for instance, in describing the judgment, says,—“A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” And again, “A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies on every side.” With especial reference to the locality, Daniel declares, that the fourth beast shall be given to the burning flame; and the King commands the goats to go into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Such passages may indicate great judgment by volcanic action in the Roman Empire, “even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner. . . . are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, (Jude 7,) and a further consignment of the victims of wrath to that region of Hades, where Dives was tormented with flame. That such judgments, though menacing every generation, should be actually fulfilled upon the quick at Christ’s coming, is accordant with the general scheme of God’s dealings. He shows forbearance for a long period, that men may be led to repentance, and many do repent under that system; but there is a cumulative principle at work, which heaps upon a final generation the results of general impenitence. Thus the long-suffering of God waited one hundred and twenty years, but at last he brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and our Lord speaks cumulatively to the Jews—“That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth,” &c. “Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.” (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36.)

In conclusion, we may observe a remarkable correspondence in the dealings with good and bad, both quick and dead. The good quick are to be conjoined to the good dead at Christ’s coming, to reign with Him on earth for a thousand years. The bad quick (viz., those in the scene of judgment—Roman Christendom)—are to be conjoined to the bad dead already in that region of Hades to which Dives went, there to remain, it should seem, in common woe until the second resurrection, when they shall receive, in the full state of man, body and soul united, their final doom.

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM.

To understand the nature of a kingdom, it is proper to consider its composition, constitution, and policy. To these three points let us address ourselves.

I. A kingdom is composed of king and subjects, together forming a body politic. In the coming kingdom, Christ will exalt His saints, as his co-heirs, to reign with Him on the earth. All these kings will be in their resurrection state. This will be an immortal state—"Neither can they die any more." It will be an angelic state; for they will be "equal unto the angels," (Luke xx. 36,) perhaps raised higher than angels; for "know ye not that we shall judge" (or rule over) "angels." (1 Cor. vi. 3.) The subjects of the kingdom upon earth will be the nations which are saved, and who are to walk in the light of the New Jerusalem. Of these nations, Israel after the flesh will be the chief—"And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion: the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." (Micah iv. 8.) "At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord." (Zeph. iii. 20.) The other nations will be partly those professing Christianity, who will not be involved in the judgments upon the fourth beast, or Roman Empire, and partly heathens—"For I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, Tubal and Javan, the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory." (Isa. lxvi. 19.) The subjects will differ in nature from their kings, in respect to marriage and mortality; for in the earthly Jerusalem will be heard the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, (Jer. xxxiii. 11,) whereas in the resurrection state "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage." And although



there will be great longevity—"For there shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days;" and "as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people"—yet there will be still mortality; for "the child shall die an hundred years old;" that is, one dying at that age shall be deemed comparatively to have died in childhood; and "the sinner, being a hundred years old, shall be accursed"—that is, he that dies so early as at a hundred, shall die, not of decay of nature, but in consequence of his own sin, the event marking him as accursed.

II. The constitution of a kingdom is either that of an absolute or a limited monarchy. In the former, the king combines in his own person the legislative, the judicial, and the executive authorities. In a limited monarchy, the two latter are his royal functions, and are exercised according to the laws made, not by him exclusively, but by a legislature. As regards the Supreme King, the constitution of the coming kingdom will be a despotism, which, though generally the worst form of government in the hands of proud, weak, and erring man, must needs be the best when animated by Divine wisdom and love. The legislative power will be in the great King, for "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. ii. 3.) The two subordinate functions, the judicial and the executive, however He may delegate their exercise, will likewise be His; and at His approach the three will thus be hailed—"The Lord is our *Judge*, the Lord is our *Lawgiver*, the Lord is our *King*; He will save us." (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) Under this glorious sovereign, His subject-kings will be in their respective provinces carrying out, judicially and executive, the laws enacted by the sole legislator. Let it not be objected that there is an incongruity of nature between these kings and their subjects. In the present dispensation men are ruled by men of like passions with themselves; and in the world to come, the reign of Christ and His saints will not necessarily abolish, but theocratically control, human

government—"All kings shall fall down before him, yea, all nations shall serve him." This evidently refers, as the context proves, to human government. But, on the other hand, it is not sufficiently considered that even now there are heavenly, or angelic, rulers over the various countries of the earth. Of this there is a plain recognition in Daniel (chap. x.) It there appears that good angels have certain principalities, as Grecia, Persia, and Palestine; also that evil angels, elsewhere called "Rulers of the darkness of this world," under their leader, Satan, "the Prince of the power of the air," are permitted to withstand them; but in the future kingdom the devil, and, most probably, his angels, will be bound. If Christians become equal to angels, what objection can there be against their ruling over the renovated earth? thereby superseding the angelic government, which, though we little understand its nature, we must believe now really subsists. "Unto the angels," says the apostle, "hath he not put in subjection the world to come." His argument is, that the age to come, will be subjected not to angels but to glorified humainty in the resurrection state, of which Christ will be the Head.

A very remarkable feature in the constitution of the coming kingdom will be an effectual union between Church and State. Melchisedec, king of righteousness, king of peace, and also priest of the most High God, was an undoubted type of Messiah, who "shall be a priest upon his throne," and who will make those who are to reign under Him, "kings and priests unto God and his Father." It is often held that religion, not politics, is the business of the Church; that politics, not religion, are the business of the State. The right principle is, that religion should pervade and sanctify civil government. But there is no wonder that this principle should be controverted in the present imperfect dispensation, seeing that where Church and State have been united, if the Church has been strong, the alliance has been worked so as to oppress the laity; and, on

the other hand, if the Church has been weak, the alliance has been worked so as to render the ecclesiastical system an engine of secular policy, while proud latitudinarianism has characterised the civil power. When monarchs are priests upon their thrones, the union of Church and State will have for its basis, not duality, but identity, and no place will be left for contrariety between them. Principles will work in harmony, because working in the same breast: their operations will flow in one consistent stream, because the fountain from which they issue will be pure and heavenly.

Of this government, by a Supreme Monarch and subordinate rulers, we may trace the type in the theocratic constitution of ancient Israel. Jehovah was their king; and, at first, judges were raised up to rule in subordination to Him. When the people foolishly demanded a new form of government, that they might be like the other nations, the Lord said unto Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Again Samuel refers to their peculiar privilege in having a theocracy, "Ye said unto me, Nay, but we will have a king to reign over us, when the Lord your God was your king." Afterwards when Jehovah indulged them with human kings, He yet in mercy continued His own theocratic reign, answering by Urim and Thummim. Both judges and kings were in one aspect typical of Christ. Joshua among the judges was eminently such a type, his very name being the same as Jesus; and judges in general were called Saviours and Deliverers, typical of Him of whom it is declared, "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion." Among the kings, David was the most eminent type of the Lord's Anointed, the Christ. In another aspect both judges and kings were probably types, not of our Lord, but of His subject kings, as ruling in subordination to Jehovah. But, in truth, we may extend this latter type to the whole nation. For God said, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep

my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests and an holy nation.*" (Exod. xix. 5, 6.) But the typical people would not obey, and at length forfeited the distinction, as our Lord declared—"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." That nation is the anti-type, and it is gathered "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. v. 9.) Very remarkable is St. Peter's description of the anti-type when compared with that above cited of the type—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter ii. 9.) To recapitulate—We have, first, a theocracy, Jehovah and His judges, or kings, judging or reigning over His people, attended with the promise, that the whole nation should become kings and priests; secondly, the forfeiture of that promise by the disobedient type; thirdly, the transference of the privilege to a nation which should prove obedient; fourthly, the fixing of that nation to true believers by St. Peter; to which we may add, that they are called by St. Paul, "the Israel of God." Thus we see, as in a glass, the constitution of the approaching reign—Jehovah-Jesus, the Supreme King, and His saints as His judges, or subject-kings, or His Israel, governing the nations upon earth. If it be hard to conceive that a separate kingdom should be found for every one of them, let us remember, that each kingdom may be of small extent, comprehending five cities, or ten cities, our Lord's own saying, also that the twelve apostles are each to have but one tribe under them. On the other hand, we should anticipate the vast multiplication of the earth's inhabitants when prodigious longevity shall prevail—"And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." (Ps. lxxii. 16.) To complete our idea of the constitution of the coming kingdom, let us, lastly, bear in mind,

that whereas angels, in their beneficent administration, are now opposed by other princes of the power of the air; that of glorified men will be subject to no such opposition. The rulers of the darkness of this world will then be bound.

III. Every government has its proper policy, some general principle which it aims at. Of some it is martial glory and conquest; of others, commercial greatness, and so forth. In the coming kingdom, that policy will be supplied which has always been wanting in earthly administration. It will consist in seeking first the glory of God, inseparable from which, though subordinate to it, will be the happiness of mankind. It will help to illustrate the difference between earthly and heavenly policy, if we take, as an example of the former, that of England, to which we are accustomed to assign the palm of superior Christianity. Nothing can be purer than the theory of her governmental aim, when in the voice of her national Church as allied to the State, she prays for the Sovereign, that "*above all things*" he, or she, may *seek the glory of God*. But practically we discern a perfect absence of this theoretic aim. India, for instance, has been placed by Providence under British rule. What policy has England pursued respecting India? The glory of God? No; but that which stands most insultingly opposed to it. To tolerate, to protect, yea, even to support heathen temples, with their accompanying abominations, to withhold encouragement from Christian missions, and even to prohibit the regular reading of the Bible in Government schools, has been deemed the wisest course. Under the ancient theocracy, when Providence gave Israel power over the heathen, Jehovah's command was, "Thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire." (Deut. vii. 5.) If England have no express commission thus to act in India, she has, at least, the obligation of a Christian government, to devote all her influence to the promotion of the glory of God, whose hand she recognizes

in the gift of that empire. But even among her Christian subjects at home, how defective the policy of her legislature and government! Her laws are framed, not for the highest object, the honour of God, but for the subordinate object, to repress injury to man. Let God look to His own cause; it would be an infringement upon conscience and liberty to put down sin, however glaring, as sin. Or if some public homage be proclaimed by laws in favour of the Sabbath, how grudging are their provisions; how feeble their enforcement! The policy in the coming reign will differ widely from that of the best government now upon earth. We cannot conceive that idolatry shall be tolerated by Christ and His saints. Not only in some public forms will true worship be upheld, but real godliness will be so energetically cherished in all the ramifications of social life, that "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness to the Lord." (Zech. xiv. 20.) This was the motto on the mitre of the typical high priest; and when our great High Priest shall sit upon His throne, when He shall exalt His saints to be likewise kings and priests unto God, the motto will be realized in all the policy of their administration, so that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The first manifestations of our Lord's zeal for the Divine glory will, at his second advent, be violent, as indicated on His royal entrance into Jerusalem at His first advent, when He violently cleansed the temple. He will, on a much larger scale, overthrow the ripened profaneness to be encountered when He comes again, bruising His enemies with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Rebellious Israel and apostate Christendom will, as we have seen, each in turn, experience His wrath. Various are the figures under which His destructive actings are set forth. Then, for instance, will be His royal nuptials, and His epithalamium describes Him unlike other bridegrooms, as immediately going forth to war—"Gird thy sword upon

thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." (Ps. xlv.) And when "the marriage of the Lamb is come," the Evangelist says—"I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix.) His bride is to be presented to Him "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" the spots and blemishes from which she is to be delivered being the same as under other figures are represented as tares among wheat, bad fish among good, foolish virgins among wise, goats among sheep; in plain terms, the disobedient Christians who now deform the true Church, and from which she must eventually be purified, so that her Lord may say, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." (Cant. iv. 7.)

Messiah's work, as a "man of war," of whom David was the proper type, being accomplished by slaying His enemies, He will next carry out the policy of His kingdom as the Prince of Peace, of whom Solomon was the type—"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth; he maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire." (Ps. xlv.) Nations had been called upon to beat their ploughshares into swords, and their pruning hooks into spears; (Joel iii. ;) now the command is reversed. (Isa. ii.) Peace being established, the judicial and executive functions will be peacefully exercised—"Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked." This done, "He shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness." (Ps. ix.) In Psalm lxxii. we have a more ample de-

scription of Messiah's peaceful reign. It may here be read with profit. We may remark also, that as when going forth to war the king is mounted on a white horse, so when He entered into Jerusalem He rode upon an ass. The animal certainly was not selected without significance, indicating that His reign in peace would fulfil the type of judicial administration, when, under the ancient theocracy, judges were borne on their circuits by that peaceful creature—"Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment." (Judges v.) It is difficult to know where to stop in citations descriptive of the happiness of the period, when "a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment;" when "many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." The reader can easily recur to numerous predictions of this kind.

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#### THE DURATION OF THE KINGDOM.

"Then," says St. Paul, "cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 24-26.) It is contended by some that the kingdom to be given up is not the kingdom which Christ will receive at His second advent, but that in which He now participates, by sitting with His Father on His throne. But it is not agreeable to the language of Scripture to treat this as Christ's kingdom which He may give up. Moreover, at His second advent, when He shall have left His Father's throne in heaven, and, by hypothesis, have given up that kingdom—so far from having put all enemies under His feet, His work of making them His footstool will only then be commencing; for He will come to slay His enemies in the



judgments already spoken of; and, in particular, death, the last enemy, so far from having been then destroyed, will do His bidding terribly, and will also continue through the millennial reign, in which the child shall die an hundred years old, and the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. The kingdom, therefore, which is to be given up, would seem to be the Millennial Kingdom. Much work has to be done in reducing it to order; for it is not to be supposed that the earth will be instantaneously brought into moral perfection at the inauguration of Christ's reign. "Of the *increase* of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice." These words indicate not sudden completion, but regular progress. The nations are to unlearn war, and to apply themselves to the arts of peace, which, combined with other indications, imply progressive advancement.

Our main difficulty in dealing with the duration arises from the apparent conflict between passages which describe the reign of Christ and His saints as for ever, and passages which limit that reign. Such, for instance, are Dan. vii 18, and Rev. xi. 15, contrasted with 1 Cor. xv. 24, and Rev. xx. 4. May not a reconciliation thus be effected? The terms "for ever" sometimes signify, not absolute eternity, but the whole extent of a particular dispensation. See Exod. xii. 24; Lev. xxv. 46; Numb. x. 8, xviii. 19; Deut. xxviii. 46; Joshua iv. 7. After the thousand years, upon whatever scale those years are to be computed, certain events, such as the loosing of Satan, and the deception of Gog and Magog, are predicted. Then it would seem that the kingdom is to be given up to God, even the Father. While we direct our earnest thoughts to the kingdom yet to come, we may safely leave what is to follow upon its resignation, when God shall be all in all, to the obscurity in which Scripture has left it.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing discussions we have passed over many texts, and omitted many topics which might have been legitimately introduced. The great theme of revelation is the Second Advent of Christ. To this the oldest prophecies relate—as the bruising of the serpent's head, a victory unaccomplished, which our own experience, as well as the prediction of the Apostle, (Rom. xvi. 20,) testify ; as Enoch's prophecy, recorded by St. Jude, and Job's thrilling exclamation—"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." To the same blessed consummation the prophets continually recur, "searching what, and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." On the same great event the New Testament writers fix their eyes, and the canon of Scripture closes with the aspiration, "Come, Lord Jesus." His coming is, in short, interwoven with the whole texture of Revelation, and innumerable thoughts touch it on every side. Perhaps nothing has contributed more to shroud the blissful prospect, than the practice of applying the phraseology in which the kingdom is spoken of to some of the results of the First Advent, as seen in the present dispensation. Types are brought down from the glories of the triumphant state to the struggles of the militant state, and this is called spiritual interpretation. Nothing is gained by this system. The doctrine which spiritualizers would educe from their procrustean constructions are stated in other texts. But while nothing is thus gained, the effect of such interpretation is to rob many passages of all definite impression. It is, moreover, a dangerous system ; for if words may be thus forced to the purpose of evangelical teachers, what a door is opened to a similar practice by heretics !

There are some who contrive to cast out of their minds a regard to that large portion of Scripture which bears upon this subject, by fixing their thoughts upon some particular text, to which they apply an erroneous interpretation—such, for instance, as “The kingdom of God is within you.” It is perfectly true, as they contend, that vital religion is an internal principle which lifts a man above the world; but this text was never intended to bring down to the level of that one principle all the distinct prophecies which set forth the kingdom of Christ and His saints. On the contrary, as Mr. Elliott has learnedly shown, this very passage is to be taken as part of the saying of those who shall exclaim, “Lo, here, the kingdom of God is within *you*; (in your country); or lo, there, the kingdom of God is within *you*, (within some other country.) To this explanation agrees the remark which our Lord makes—“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation”—will not be subjected to fixed and attentive regard, or to such indications as might be pointed out by saying, “Lo, here; or lo, there.” No; it will be sudden, unquestionable, convincing; for “as the lightning shineth from one part of heaven to the other, so shall the Son of Man be in his day.” (Luke xvii. 20–24.) Compare also Matt. xxiv. 26, 27.

In some of the prophecies the reader meets with difficulties, by failing to distinguish between the Church of restored Israel and the Church of the saints, Jews and Gentiles. Both are represented under the same figure—the bride. The New Jerusalem is a celestial bride, consisting of kings and priests in their resurrection state. The earthly bride is Israel after the flesh, now cast off, but then re-united. Possibly a type of Christ’s double marriage may have been intended in that of Jacob with Leah and Rachel. The idea is fully borne out by the prophetic figure, in which the Lord is exhibited as the husband of both Aholah and Aholibah. (Ezek. xxiii.)

Having at the outset glanced at the popular belief, let us now briefly sum up the Scriptural. The believer looks forward to death as a gentle sleep—the body, with its organs, ceasing, as in sleep, to act or feel, and resigned to insensibility, with anticipation of renovated vigour; the soul, passing into Paradise, not there to sleep, but to be alive unto God, “who is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Into the details of that blissful state the believer enters not, because he would not be wise above what is written. But Paradisiacal bliss is an imperfect state, in which disembodied souls look forward to the morning of the resurrection, when they shall be clothed upon with heavenly houses, or spiritual bodies, not flesh and blood, but incorruptible and immortal; when the spirits of justified men shall be made perfect by this union, and they shall be equal unto angels. Oh! happy period of unutterable exultation, when they shall hear the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God—when they shall be caught up, together with the faithful quick, to meet the Lord in the air, and in that day of His power, as His willing people, return with Him to judgment upon the last confederated apostasy, after which they will enter on their several spheres of government as kings and priests, not all in equal dignity, but differing, as one star differeth from another star in glory! Associated with that period is the restoration of Israel; and the Lord's people are not only taught to pray, “Thy kingdom come,” but exhorted “to keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Oh! blissful dispensation, when Emmanuel, God with us, shall take to Him His great power and reign! Heaven and earth shall be full of the majesty of His glory, the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the holy Church throughout all the world, all, all shall swell the chorus! The inanimate creation

becoming jubilant, the heavens shall rejoice and the earth shall be glad ; the sea shall roar, and the fulness thereof ; the field shall be joyful, and all that is therein ; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord, for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.

“ Waft, waft ye winds His story,  
And you, ye waters, roll ;  
Till like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.  
Till o'er our ransom'd nature,  
The Lamb for sinners slain ;  
Redeemer, King, Creator,  
In bliss returns to reign.”